

Coastal Observation Technology System Project Summary – 2004

Project Name/Title: Development of the Regional Association for the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System

Date Project Initiated: October 1, 2003

Recipient Institution: Texas A&M University via the Texas A&M Research Foundation

Primary Contact:

Worth D. Nowlin, Jr.
Department of Oceanography
Texas A&M University
3146 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-3146
Phone: (979) 845-3900
Fax: (979) 847-8879
E-mail: wnowlin@tamu.edu

Project Web Site: www.gcoos.org

Brief Project Summary: Our overall objective is to develop a Regional Association for the management of a Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS) as a contribution to the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). The effort will include development of linkages with coastal observing programs of other nations in the Gulf. GCOOS is being developed on the principles of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) as stated in the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission report (1998) and those of the IOOS as given in the U.S. IOOS Phased Implementation Plan.

Accomplishments to Date:

Organization of meetings

- Organized an IOOS-Industry meeting, held March 2 to 4, 2004, at Marathon Oil Company in Houston, Texas, to explore private-sector interests and roles in the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System with a focus on the regional observing systems of the Gulf of Mexico and southeastern U.S. Ninety-six attended, of whom 64 were from private sectors involved in marine activities. The workshop was judged to be highly successful by the attendees. Details of the meeting, including all presentations, are available via the GCOOS Web site.
- Worth Nowlin served on the steering committee for and attended a Harmful Algal Blooms Observing System–GCOOS workshop held April 13 to 14, 2004, in St. Petersburg, Florida. Mark Luther and Charlie Colgan also attended.
- Seven key GCOOS planners met in Stennis, Mississippi, on May 13 to examine inputs from the GCOOS stakeholders regarding highest priorities for the enhancements and additions to the national backbone and GCOOS for the Gulf of Mexico.
- Worth Nowlin served on the organizing committee for the Next Steps workshop held on July 7 to 8, 2004, at the Bush Presidential Conference Center. The objective was to set a research agenda for the Gulf in response to the Preliminary Report of the U.S.

Commission on Ocean Policy. Commissioners participated. Nowlin gave a presentation on GCOOS Development.

- The key players identified in the proposal have begun planning for the first all-Gulf stakeholders meeting to ratify interim governance structure and begin work toward a business plan.

Attendance at meetings

- Robert Martin attended the ninth meeting of the U.S. GOOS Steering Committee in November 2003 in St. Petersburg, Florida, as the representative of GCOOS. He made a presentation on the status of the observing system.
- Luis Cifuentes (Texas A&M University) attended the Education Planning Workshop held March 22 to 24, 2004, in Charleston, South Carolina, as the GCOOS representative.
- Worth Nowlin, Robert Martin Mark Luther (University of South Florida), and Landry Bernard attended the second national summit of Regional Associations held March 29 to 30, 2004, in Washington, D.C.
- Frank Muller-Karger attended the workshop and symposium on coastal ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico, Toward the Integration of Research Groups, June 30 to July 3, in Veracruz, Mexico.

Other development activities

- Information regarding the nature and costs of Gulf observing system elements, including desired improvements, sources of support, and estimated costs through fiscal year 2011, was assembled by Nowlin; a first Gulf user survey was carried out with funding from Texas Sea Grant.
- Practically all Gulf observing system elements producing real-time data streams have been integrated via the National Data Buoy Center.

Current Year Objectives:

- Obtain agreement on interim structure for GCOOS Regional Association on preferred longer-term structure.
- Hold stakeholders' meeting to begin development of GCOOS business plan.
- With assistance of Gulf Coast Sea Grant programs and the Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence, establish a GCOOS Education Council.

Partners:

- Robert (Buzz) Martin, Texas General Land Office
- Landry Bernard, University of Southern Mississippi, National Data Buoy Center
- Vernon Asper, University of Southern Mississippi
- Frank Muller-Karger, University of South Florida
- Robert Stickney, Texas Sea Grant program